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ABSTRACT

This guide for parents indicates ways in which they can help their childen succeed in school. Sections focusing on language arts and mathematics list skills that students are required to master in kindergarten through fifth grades and suggest language arts activities for parents to implement at home. (RH)

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Helping Your Children Succeed in School

—A Parents' Guide—

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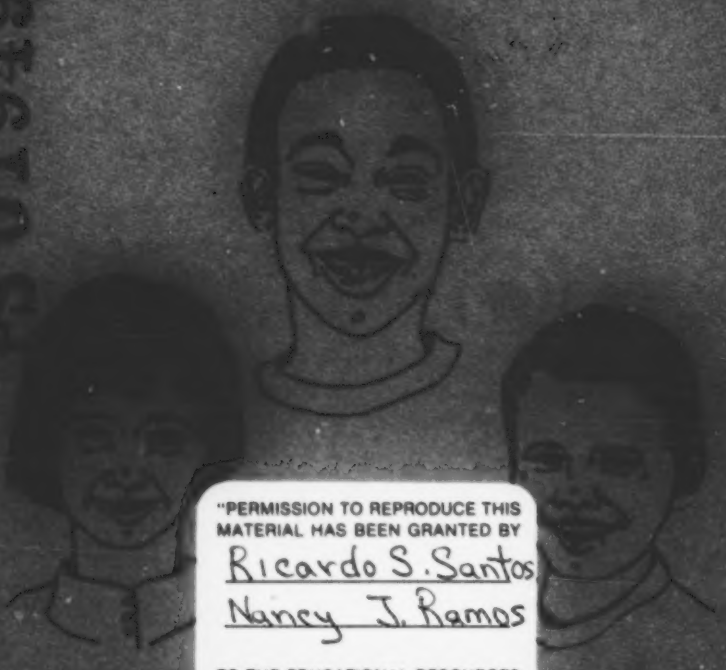

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HELPING YOUR CHILDREN SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

-- A PARENTS' GUIDE --

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INTRODUCTION

The most important teachers children will ever have are their parents. To ensure success in school, it is very important that parents and classroom teachers form a partnership. An open line of communication should be maintained between the home and the school. This includes attending conferences arranged by the school as well as requesting conferences with the classroom teachers. This will make it easier for parents to keep up-to-date with what their children are learning in school and will also keep them informed about how well they are progressing in their studies.

There are many activities which can be completed in the home environment to promote student success in school. One very important thing that parents can do is to insist that their children attend school regularly. When parents help their children establish good attendance and good study habits when they first enter school, these habits are likely to stay with them throughout their formal years of schooling.

The importance of having a scheduled "homework time" cannot be overemphasized. Parents should provide a quiet study area in the home. They should also supervise their children's completion of homework assignments and show an interest in their studies.

Learning is a rewarding experience for both parents and their children. When learning is a shared task, it is easier for

students to succeed in school. The following activities can be completed in the home to develop children's language and math skills. Parents should vary the level of difficulty of each activity to meet the age and developmental level of their children. In this way, parents will make sure that their children experience success in learning.

LANGUAGE ARTS

The Texas Education Agency has identified basic skills that students must master in order to be promoted to the next grade. The following list identifies some of the language skills that students are required to master at each grade level. Parents are encouraged to involve their children in activities which will reinforce the development of these language skills whenever possible.

KINDERGARTEN

* discriminate letters/sounds
* distinguish between shapes and forms
* recognize direction of conventional print

* identify what a story is about
* recall facts and details
* arrange events in sequential order
* distinguish between real and make believe
* retell a story
* follow oral directions
* respond to storytelling by drawing or painting

FIRST GRADE

* share ideas in group discussions
* use correct punctuation
* write manuscript letters clearly
* identify vocabulary words by sight
* alphabetize words according to initial consonant
* identify the main idea of a story
* understand cause and effect relationships
* predict outcomes

* identify singular and plural forms of regular nouns
* distinguish between fantasy/fact

SECOND GRADE

* recall important details
* identify the main idea of several paragraphs
* distinguish between fact and fantasy
* predict outcomes
* identify initial blends/digraphs/ diphthongs
* write in complete sentences
* spell words independently
* use correct capitalization
* identify common irregular verbs
* identify singular and plural nouns

THIRD GRADE

* participate in dramatic activities
* relate events with elaboration

* summarize a passage
* distinguish between fact, nonfact, and opinion
* draw conclusions
* identify multiple causes of an event
* follow two and three-step directions
* identify prefixes and suffixes
* use a dictionary to identify word meaning
* identify parts of a book: index, glossary, table of contents

FOURTH GRADE

* comprehend implied main idea
* identify time and setting of a story
* participate in creative dramatic activities
* write persuasive paragraphs
* correctly use fundamentals of grammar, punctuation, and spelling
* use correct form of irregular verbs

* write cursive letters legibly
* identify words with two or more prefixes/suffixes
* follow multi-step directions
* use simple maps, charts, and graphs

FIFTH GRADE

* identify word meaning from context
* summarize a selection
* draw logical conclusions
* make generalizations
* narrow a topic for a specific purpose
* logically sequence writing ideas
* identify parts of a book: preface and copyright page
* locate information in a dictionary and encyclopedia
* use the dictionary's pronunciation key
* use graphic sources: tables, charts, graphs, maps, globes

Language Arts Activities

While it is true that students are required to learn many skills in school, these skills can be reinforced in the home. The following suggestions are offered as a means of helping parents develop their children's language skills:

1. Play listening games to help your children sharpen their listening skills.
2. Teach your children to follow simple directions.
3. Make your children aware of their immediate surroundings by discussing the weather, neighborhood businesses, etc.
4. Provide your children with a wide range of experiences, such as a trip to the zoo, the mall, or a park. Discuss each experience with your children and ask them for a description.

5. Say several action words (i.e., run, jump, clap, hop, etc.) and ask your children to act them out.
6. Teach your children nursery rhymes. Ask your older children to substitute the names of friends and family members for the main characters.
7. Recite a nursery rhyme to your children. Then have them act it out.
8. Always provide your children with the correct names for things.
9. Teach your children riddles.
10. Say a series of words. The words should all rhyme except one. Tell your children to clap when they hear the word that does not rhyme.
11. Read aloud to your children and discuss each story. Be sure to ask specific questions to check for comprehension.

12. Ask your children to draw a picture. Then ask them to tell you about the drawing.
13. Help your children tape-record some of their favorite stories.
14. Play guessing games with your children.
15. Select a beginning sound and have your children cut out magazine pictures that begin with that sound. For example, you might ask your children to draw a moon. Then have them cut out pictures of objects that begin with m (man, milk, marbles, etc.). Ask them to glue these pictures on the moon they drew.
16. Teach/review basic sight words.
17. Make "Opposites" books.
18. Teach rhyming words.

19. Make "Sequence" books.

20. Have your children dictate a story. Then read the story back to them. You may also wish to collect these stories in booklet form.

21. Teach words that begin and end with the same consonant sounds.

22. Take your children on a walk. Have them look for objects that begin with the same sound as their first name.

23. Give your children a copy of an old newspaper. Ask them to look through the headlines and cut out the letters of the alphabet. Then have them put the letters in alphabetical order.

24. Select a comic strip from the newspaper. Cut out each frame from the strip. Then ask your children to place the frames in the correct order again.

25. Help your children understand the concept of synonyms/antonyms.

26. Obtain a library card for your children and visit the library regularly.

27. Encourage your children to write by making writing utensils (pencils, crayons, markers, etc.) and paper readily available.

28. Help your children write their favorite recipes.

29. Encourage your children to write to pen pals.

30. Provide your children with <u>cloze passages</u> to check for reading comprehension skills.

To construct your own cloze exercises:

* Choose a passage from a story. Your children's textbooks are a good source of material.
* Copy the first sentence of the paragraph exactly as it appears in the story.

* Leave a blank for every seventh word in the rest of the passage.
* Ask your children to complete the paragraph by "filling in the blanks" with words which make sense.
* Depending on the age of your children, you may wish to include a list of possible words. For younger children, use picture cards of the words that would correctly complete the sentences.

The following is an example of a cloze passage:

Dinosaurs no longer live on the earth. They died a long, long time _____. American scientists do not know exactly _____. One reason might have been that _____ type of food they ate changed. _____ think the plants changed. The plant-eating _____ could not eat these new plants.

_____ food the huge plant eaters could _____ live. Do you know why this _____ also affect the meat-eating dinosaurs? The _____ dinosaurs needed the plant-eating dinosaurs for _____.

Source:

Holt Science, Third Grade Level, page 95.

MATHEMATICS

The following list identifies some of the basic math skills that students must master in order to be promoted to the next grade level. Parents are encouraged to reinforce mathematical concepts whenever possible.

KINDERGARTEN

* understand number concepts
* place groups of objects in order: greatest to least
* count objects one to ten
* recognize numbers one to ten
* match numbers with groups of objects
* solve story problems orally
* copy/complete patterns

* classify shapes: circle, square, rectangle, triangle
* match two identical shapes
* locate numbers on a number line

FIRST GRADE

* match numbers with sets of objects
* count by twos, fives, and tens to 50
* group objects by tens and ones
* add whole numbers to 10
* subtract whole numbers to 10
* name days, dates, and months on a calendar
* measure weight using a scale
* measure the length of an object using a ruler
* measure temperature with a thermometer
* place numbers in order on the number line

SECOND GRADE

* identify odd and even numbers

* recognize the fraction for a shaded part of a figure or set
* express numbers in expanded notation
* use charts and graphs
* tell time to the hour, half-hour, nearest five minutes
* add 3 two-digit numbers (with carrying)
* subtract two-digit numbers (with borrowing)
* identify cube, sphere, cylinder, triangular and rectangular prisms
* measure weight: ounces, pounds, kilograms
* measure liquids: cups, pints, quarts, liters

THIRD GRADE

* compare numbers using = , > , <
* write the fraction for a shaded portion of a group or figure to tenths
* tell value of a set of coins

* write basic multiplication and division facts to fives
* tell time to nearest five minutes using a.m. and p.m.
* use calendar to find information
* use charts and graphs
* recognize equivalent fractions
* read and write up to four-digit numbers
* express numbers in expanded notation

FOURTH GRADE

* round a number to the nearest 10 or 100
* name place value of a digit in a number up to 5 digits
* identify equivalent fractions
* draw a number line with fractions and decimals
* interpret pictographs, line graphs, and bar graphs
* estimate measurement
* add fractions with like denominators

* subtract fractions with like denominators
* identify properties of 2 and 3-dimensional shapes
* write 100 basic facts: + , - , x , ÷

FIFTH GRADE

* write numbers in expanded form
* round numbers to nearest 10,000
* identify equivalent fractions
* add and subtract decimals
* find area with grids
* read and interpret charts and graphs
* collect and interpret information
* construct a graph
* multiply decimals
* use instruments to measure length, weight, liquid, temperature

Math Activities

The following suggestions are offered as a means of helping parents develop their children's mathematical skills in the home:

1. Maintain a daily calendar in your home on which your children keep track of fun activities.
2. Write a numeral on a piece of paper and ask your children to draw that number of objects (i.e., seven stars).
3. Provide your children with magazines. Ask them to cut out pictures of objects that are circular, triangular, etc.
4. Help each of your children maintain a record of personal information (i.e., date of birth, height, weight, color of eyes and hair).
5. Help your children bake cookies. Then ask them to count the cookies by twos, threes, etc.

6. Provide your children with old newspapers. Have them cut out numbers and sequence them in order.

7. Ask your children to choose three numerals from the telephone dial. Then have them add the numbers. Older children can be asked to multiply two of the numbers.

8. Have your children set a clock to show various times (i.e., 8:00, 1:00, 3:30, 6:30, etc.).

9. Pop popcorn for your children. Then have them divide the popped kernels so that they each receive an equal portion.

10. Provide your children with rulers. Have them measure various objects in your home.

11. Ask your children to count the number of forks and spoons in your home.

12. Place a hat on the floor. Have your children throw pennies at it from a few feet away. Then have them count the number of pennies that actually went into the hat.
13. Take your children shopping with you. Ask them to help you add the prices of several items.
14. Teach your children to follow recipe directions. Help them measure the necessary ingredients. Then ask them to draw a picture illustrating the steps that were followed.
15. Have your younger children find objects that are of a particular color (red, blue, yellow, etc.).
16. Help your children learn how to sort items by having them help you sort the laundry according to dark and light-colored fabrics. Then ask them to sort the laundry into piles of shirts, dresses, pants, etc.

17. Ask your children to count the number of steps required to go from one room in your home to another.

18. Tell your children to collect and count all of the shoes belonging to members of your household. Then have them divide the shoes into pairs and determine who has the most pairs.

19. Write several number words on slips of paper (i.e., forty-two, thirty-one, seventy-three, etc.). Then ask your children to look through newspapers and magazines to cut out the numerals for these words.

20. Provide your children with a newspaper listing of TV programs. Help them locate television programs that begin at particular times (8:00 a.m.. 11:00 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., etc.).

21. Teach your children to read a thermometer. Then help them complete a chart to keep track of the temperature on a daily basis.

22. Ask your children to write a daily schedule which indicates the time various activities will take place (i.e., eat breakfast, go to bed, etc.)

23. Provide your children with grocery ads and ask them to cut out ten numerals. Then have them arrange the numerals in order from least to greatest and greatest to least.

24. Ask your children to estimate the number of items in a jar. Then have them count the contents to determine whose estimate was the closest to the correct numer.

25. Have your children add the number of light bulbs in your home to the number of chairs.

26. Provide your children with play money. Help them develop the ability to "make change" by role-playing various situations they may encounter at the store.

27. Make up word problems involving financial transactions. For example, ask your children how much money they would need if they wanted to buy three bananas at 10¢ each.

28. Ask your children to write the numerals that correspond to several number words: nine, twenty, forty, sixty-eight, one hundred and fifty, etc. Remember to choose number words that are geared to the age and developmental level of your children.

29. Plan an outing with your children during summer vacation. Determine a time schedule for specific activities to take place.

30. Obtain a bus schedule for your children and teach them how to read it. Then plan a shopping trip with them and ask them to determine departure and arrival times at specific locations.

CONCLUSION

Research studies indicate that children are likely to develop positive attitudes toward school when their parents display interest in their school experiences. Therefore, parents are strongly encouraged to set a good example by demonstrating that they understand the value of obtaining a good education. This handbook provided parents with activities which can be completed in the home to reinforce the instruction their children receive in school.

It is of extreme importance that parents recognize the fact that their children need to feel successful. Therefore, the learning materials they provide

in their home should be at the children's instructional level. This is especially true of books which should reflect the children's particular reading ability. The development of reading skills should be emphasized at all levels, because reading problems may signal difficulty in other subject areas. For example, to solve word problems in math, children must be able to read the problems. It is also important to keep in mind that research studies indicate that successful readers are also successful students in school.